

Message Text

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ACTION SNM-05

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, EC

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ECUADOREAN POLICE CHIEF ON NARCOTICS

1. SUMMARY. THE CHARGE DEA/SAIC, AND CHIEF OF THE NARCOTICS CONTROL DIVISION MET WITH THE GENERAL COMMANDER OF THE NATIONAL POLICE TO POINT OUT INADEQUACIES IN POLICE NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT, AND TO TRY TO INFLUENCE THE POLICE TO PERFORM BETTER IN THIS AREA. THE CONVERSATION WAS VERY FRANK AND INCLUDED THE NEED TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH POLICE CORRUPTION. THE GENERAL COMMANDER'S REACTION APPEARED POSITIVE AND HE HAS ALREADY TAKEN SOME MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO THE MISSION'S REPRESENTATION. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF OTHER SUGGESTED CHANGES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AND IF POLICE EFFORTS IN THIS AREA WILL IMPROVE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CHARGE ACCCOMPANIED BY THE DEA/SAIC AND THE CHIEF OF THE NARCOTICS CONTROL DIVISION, MET WITH GENERAL ALBERTO VILLAMARIN, GENERAL COMMANDER OF THE ECUADOREAN POLICE, ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 27 TO DISCUSS THE INADEQUATE PERFORMANCE OF THE ECUADOREAN

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POLICE IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT. REFERRING TO A SIGN ON THE GENERAL'S WALL, "ACTION ARE MORE SINCERE THAN WORDS", THE CHARGE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOE'S WORDS ABOUT NARCOTICS DID NOT YET SEEM TO BE VALIDATED IN THE ACTIONS OF THE NATIONAL POLICE. THE CHARGE REVIEWED USG-GOE DISCUSSION ON NARCOTICS SINCE NOVEMBER OF 1975 WHEN AMBASSADOR BLOOMFIELD, AFTER SEVERAL YEARS

OF UNSUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE BY THE EMBASSY WITH THE POLICE AND AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, RAISED THE SUBJECT TO THE SUPREME COUNCIL LEVEL IN A MEETING WITH GENERAL DURAN. SPECIAL EMPHASIS WAS GIVEN BY THE CHARGE TO THE COMMITMENT MADE BY ADMIRAL POVEDA TO SENIOR NARCOTICS ADVISOR FALCO AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARELLANO IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR.

3. THE CHARGE STATED THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE INTEREST AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE GOE IN DOING SOMETHING ABOUT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND ABUSE, AS EVIDENCED BY THE NEW NARCOTICS LAW AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATEMENTS OF HIGH GOE OFFICIALS, BUT SUGGESTED THAT THE ECUADOREAN NATIONAL POLICE'S PERFORMANCE HAS NOT YET IMPROVED SUFFICIENTLY TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THE GOE'S DECLARED "WAR ON NARCOTICS". THE CHARGE CONGRATULATED VILLAMARIN ON THE ARREST OF SEVERAL MAJOR TRAFFICKERS AND THE SEIZURE OF A MAJOR LABORATORY, BUT SAID THAT MUCH MORE COULD AND SHOULD BE DONE. HE ALSO POINTED TO THE FAILURE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE DETECTOR DOG PROGRAM, THE IMPROPER UTILIZATION OF VEHICLES DONATED TO THE NATIONAL POLICE BY THE USG, AND THE FAILURE TO ASSIGN TO NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT POSITIONS POLICE OFFICIALS WITH USG NARCOTICS TRAINING.

4. THE CHARGE HIT VERY HARD ON THE CORRUPTION OF
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POLICE OFFICERS IN KEY NARCOTICS POSITIONS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE NEW AND CURRENT HEAD OF THE NATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL DIVISION AND THE NEW HEAD OF THE QUITO NARCOTICS POLICE AND INTERPOL OFFICE SEEMED TO BE EXCELLENT, AND HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THIS REFLECTED A NEW POLICY IN ASSIGNMENTS. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT REPORTS OF CORRUPT POLICE ACTIONS STILL ARRIVE FREQUENTLY TO HIS DESK.

5. THE DEA/SAIC ASKED GENERAL VILLAMARIN IF IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO NAME AN OFFICER WITH RESPONSIBILITY ONLY FOR THE POLICE'S NATIONAL NARCOTICS PROGRAM RATHER THAN, AS IS NOW THE CASE, HAVE A POLICE COLONEL WHO IN ADDITION TO NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT ALSO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AND OTHER POLICE WORK. VILLAMARIN REPLIED THAT HE HAD WANTED TO DO THIS FOR SOME TIME BUT THAT IT COULD NOT BE DONE WITHOUT A DECREE TO ESTABLISH THE ORGANIZATION OF THE POLICE IN THIS MANNER. HE SAID SUCH A DECREE HAD LONG BEEN PENDING AND THAT HE DID NOT KNOW IF AND WHEN IT WOULD BE PROMULGATED, BUT THAT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT THIS HIGHLY DESIRABLE CHANGE THROUGH

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. HE PROMISED TO LOOK FURTHER INTO THE SUBJECT.

6. GENERAL VILLAMARIN'S RESPONSE WAS ON THE WHOLE POSITIVE. HE THANKED THE CHARGE FOR HIS FRANKNESS AND PLEDGED HIS BEST EFFORT IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT. HE ASKED THAT THE EMBASSY DEAL DIRECTLY WITH HIM ON ANY INADEQUACIES IN THE NATIONAL POLICE NARCOTICS EFFORT THAT WE OBSERVED, AND HE REQUESTED SPECIFICALLY THE NAMES OF CORRUPT POLICE OFFICIALS.

7. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY LEARNED THAT THE NEXT DAY GENERAL VILLAMARIN ORDERED A HALT TO ANY MISUSE OF DONATED VEHICLES AND THAT VEHICLES BE RE-
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DISTRIBUTED TO NARCOTICS POLICE OFFICERS IN MACHALA, A VERY ACTIVE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AREA. THE EMBASSY INTENDS TO PROVIDE VILLAMARIN THE NAMES OF ONE OR TWO CORRUPT POLICE OFFICIALS TO BEGIN WITH TO SEE WHAT KIND OF ACTION WILL BE TAKEN. WE WILL ALSO BE WATCHING TO SEE IF ANY CHANGE IN THE POLICE'S COMMAND STRUCTURE FOR NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT OCCURS.

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